

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE TRAFFIC COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Traffic Commission convened in a regular meeting at 7:01 p.m. on Monday, November 7, 2011 in the West Annex meeting room at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Sargent led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Galvin, Sargent, Siani,
Tsao, Walter, and Chairperson Rudolph.

Absent: Commissioner Green.

Also Present: Engineering Manager Semaan and
Associate Engineer Kamimura.

MOTION: Commissioner Galvin moved to grant Commissioner Green an excused absence for the November 7, 2011 Traffic Commission meeting. Commissioner Walter seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner Siani moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Sargent seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: OCTOBER 3, 2011

MOTION: Commissioner Galvin moved for the approval of the October 3, 2011 Traffic Commission meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Sargent seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Green).

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1

None.

7. ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION

Chairperson Rudolph explained the policies and procedures of the Traffic Commission, including the right to appeal decisions to City Council.

7a. **RECEIVE AND FILE CALTRANS INFORMATION ON SIGNAL TIMING AND COORDINATION OF HAWTHORNE BOULEVARD, PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, AND WESTERN AVENUE**

Engineering Manager Semaan provided background on the item and welcomed Yunus Ghausi, Senior Transportation Engineer, Office of Traffic Investigations, Caltrans.

Mr. Ghausi provided a powerpoint presentation on the Adaptive Traffic Control System, A Strategic Growth Plan Project. He shared information about California's Strategic Growth Plan of 2005 that enabled Caltrans to use SHOPP to fund speedy implementation of effective solutions to congestion problems. He stated that they were only given two years to identify corridors, design improvements, build and operate the projects, and conduct an evaluation. He stated that five corridors were identified, three within Torrance—Pacific Coast Highway (SR1) from Airport Drive to Palos Verdes Boulevard, Hawthorne Boulevard (SR 107) from Skypark Drive to Redondo Beach Boulevard, and Western Avenue (SR 213) from 238th Street to Route 405 Freeway.

He stated that at one time all traffic signals were operated manually on a fixed cycle but that the Adaptive Traffic Control System (ATCS) is a new technology that enables arterial system management through automated signal timing optimization based on real-time traffic conditions. He discussed the criteria and long-term vision of ATCS: Arterial System Management through corridor-wide traffic signal systems optimization and coordinated adaptive control and integrated freeway/arterial system management through integrated system-wide adaptive ramp metering and adaptive arterial signal control. He stated that the project included signal hardware upgrades, communication system upgrades with fiber optics, augmented detection system capability, and real-time video capability for system performance verification.

Mr. Ghausi explained how the system works, noting that it takes into account demands on all approaches; therefore, priority is given to the approach with the highest demand. He presented benefits of ATCS that include maximizing the efficiency of a signal in an intersection, reducing the number of delays, reducing the number of stops along the corridor, and optimizing traffic signals. He noted that the system has been determined to be very efficient and, based on the post-evaluation conducted in 2010, congestion was reduced by 20-25%, travel time by 10%, average stops by 20%, and average delay by 18%. He stated that Caltrans will continue beefing up detection on major cross streets belonging to other jurisdictions and continue close coordination with other signal operators, expressing hope for support from local agencies with Measure R projects.

Responding to Commissioner Sargent's inquiry, Mr. Ghausi stated that the system is computer controlled, that there are monitoring screens in the Traffic Management Centers, and that an individual is present in case the system fails or a complaint comes in.

In response to Commissioner Siani's inquiry, he provided clarification that three signals along Western Avenue are operated by Caltrans while nine are operated by the City of Los Angeles and are not currently integrated with other agency traffic signal management systems. He explained that the Caltrans signals are operated in the free-operation mode and are not synchronized. He discussed the need to enter into an interagency agreement to make the system comparable and not favor one system over

Deborah Schaffer
Recording Secretary

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another and encouraged the City to invest in ATCS especially for the major corridors of Torrance Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard.

Chairperson Rudolph stated that they would like to see an action plan and timeline for implementation, noting that there is also a problem with synchronization at Hawthorne Boulevard.

Mr. Ghausi stated that once Torrance has implemented ATCS it can take the lead in managing traffic control for those corridors that cross Hawthorne Boulevard. He noted that it would require upgrading hardware, fiber optics, CCTV cameras, video detection, and a monitoring system.

Engineering Manager Semaan stated that the systems differ greatly from each other. He noted that the system on Western Avenue is prioritized first on the State highway system and is secondly integrated onto the local system. He explained that the City needs to work with the system that is in place and cannot favor side streets. He noted that upgrading the hardware and communication systems for ATCS is a huge investment and that the City has been working with Los Angeles County for seven years for the global coordination of practically all major arterials within the County and establishing a Traffic Management Center in the City.

Mr. Ghausi stated that Caltrans intends to beef up detection on major cross streets belonging to other jurisdictions and that a long term solution would be for the City to take over some of the highway systems that are within the City.

Responding to Commissioner Tsao's inquiry, he stated that a second post-evaluation study would require some resources but is manageable.

Chairperson Rudolph received clarification that City of Los Angeles controls the signal operation at the intersection of Western Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard and Mr. Ghausi offered to relay the request for better system management.

Commissioner Walter expressed an interest in going on a field trip to the Caltrans Traffic Management Center in downtown Los Angeles and Mr. Ghausi welcomed the Commission to visit.

7a. TRAFFIC COMMISSION WORK PLAN – SECOND PRIORITY
Develop a Guideline for Protected Permissive Left-Turn Signals

Engineering Manager Semaan provided background on the item continued from the Commission meeting of October 3, 2011. He recommended that the Commission concur with the following list that represents the Traffic Commission's modified and prioritized criteria used on when NOT to consider Flashing Yellow Arrow Permissive-Only left-turn phasing:

1. Non-Torrance Primary Agency Intersection;
2. More than one left-turn lane in one direction;
3. Left-turn movement crosses three or more opposing through lanes;
4. Critical speed limit is over 45 mph;
5. A left-turn accident problem exists; and
6. A line of sight issue exists.

He noted that Attachment A is a spreadsheet of 166 signalized intersections populated with criteria identified by the Commission for further consideration of Flashing Yellow Arrow (FYA) Permissive-Only left-turn indication. He stated that when City Council adopts and approves the criteria, the intersections on the list would be considered if a project comes along, if a street is being resurfaced, and if funding is available. He stated that field observations and peak hour traffic counts would be taken but pointed out that if there is not a back-up or other problem at that intersection, there would be no need to consider implementation.

In response to Chairperson Rudolph's inquiry, Engineering Manager Semaan advised that cost of implementation would vary based on location.

MOTION: Commissioner Walter moved to concur with the list of criteria as the guideline for when not to consider Flashing Yellow Arrow Permissive-Only left-turn phasing. Commissioner Sargent seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Green).

7C. TRAFFIC COMMISSION WORK PLAN – THIRD PRIORITY
Pedestrian Crosswalk Enhancement
Audio/Tactile/In-Pavement Flashing Markers

Engineering Manager Semaan introduced the item and welcomed Associate Engineer Kamimura.

Associate Engineer Kamimura provided a presentation on enhanced crosswalks that are implemented to enhance driver awareness of pedestrians and assist pedestrians utilizing crosswalks at signalized and non-signalized intersections. With the aide of photographs, he showed examples of audio, tactile, and In-Pavement Flashing Marker systems. He stated that audio and tactile systems are utilized primarily for visually impaired individuals. He noted that the City has been installing countdown displays at all new and upgraded intersections to inform pedestrians of the number of seconds remaining in the pedestrian change interval. He stated that the City does not have any In-Pavement Flashing Markers, adding that they cannot be used at crosswalks controlled by yield signs, stop signs, or traffic control signals.

Commissioner Walter stated that In-Pavement Flashing Markers are expensive to maintain and give pedestrians a false sense of security.

Commissioner Sargent asked staff to provide a list of non-intersection crosswalks in the City, starting with arterial roadways.

Engineering Manager Semaan stated that there are still a few mid-block crosswalks in the City such as one at Nadine Circle. He pointed out that the enhancements presented could be considered for any existing crosswalks or applied to any proposed crosswalks that come forward in the future.

Commissioner Sargent described a flashing yellow light on a signal arm on Fairfax Avenue that lights up when a pedestrian is crossing the intersection, and Engineering Manager Semaan stated that this device could be added to the "toolbox" to be considered when the need arises.

Commissioner Galvin suggested removing In-Pavement Flashing Markers from tools to be considered.

Commissioner Siani stated that In-Pavement Flashing Markers are a good visual enhancement and suggested using them on uncontrolled crosswalks on Cabrillo Avenue in the commercial area.

Commissioner Walter received clarification that the crosswalk at Hawthorne Boulevard and 242nd Street is not signalized but that it is scheduled to be removed as part of a condition of approval.

Chairperson Rudolph suggested prioritizing criteria based on crosswalks near schools and expressed concern about visibility at the intersection of 182nd Street and Bailey Drive that is used by three schools.

Engineering Manager Semaan stated that 182nd Street and Bailey Drive could be an intersection to consider crosswalk enhancements. He recommended identifying the tools for the “toolbox” and then bringing them forward when a problem presents itself and not assuming there is a problem just because there is proximity to a school. He stated that the purpose of the work plan priority is not to do an analysis of crosswalk needs in the City; however, if a concern comes forward, it can be determined which tool is best to deploy and apply.

Commissioner Tsao requested that staff bring back advantages of disadvantages of each type of crosswalk enhancement, including the flashing yellow that Commissioner Sargent described.

Commissioner Siani stated that it would be helpful to also know the cost benefit of the different approaches and possible intersections where enhancements would be beneficial.

Engineering Manager Semaan pointed out that safety issues are flagged by the Police Department and have to be addressed, and that they work with the Police Department regarding locations of crossing guards.

Commissioner Galvin voiced support for adding In-Pavement Flashing Markers to the “toolbox”, pointing out that costs and technology might change in the future.

At Chairperson Rudolph’s request, Engineering Manager Semaan explained that residents from New Horizons requested the crosswalk with yellow flashers and remote sensors at Nadine Circle and that they are satisfied with the installation.

MOTION: Commissioner Galvin moved for staff to bring back the “toolbox” of crosswalk enhancements to be considered including flashing signals as well as application criteria for the intersection of 182nd Street and Bailey Drive and for Cabrillo Avenue. Commissioner Tsao seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Green).

8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2

8a. Engineering Manager Semaan stated that an item is going to City Council on November 15, 2011 regarding the intersection improvements at Hawthorne Boulevard and Skypark Drive.

8b. Commissioner Sargent related his observation that often there is a huge back-up on Calle Mayor at Anza Avenue and asked that timing of signal lights be assessed.

8c. In response to Chairperson Rudolph's concern about the intersection of 182nd and Hawthorne Boulevard, Engineering Manager Semaan stated that he would follow up on the status of that request to Caltrans.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At 8:53 p.m., Commissioner Sargent moved to adjourn the meeting to December 5, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex meeting room, Torrance City Hall, and, hearing no objection, Chairperson Rudolph so ordered.

Approved as Submitted December 5, 2011 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
